

New Zealand Teachers Travel Around the World for Tempe Exchange

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Their home cities of Upper and Lower Hutt, New Zealand are the sites for beautiful scenes from "Lord of the Rings." Two teachers who visited Tempe Elementary schools through a Tempe Sister Cities exchange program answered many questions about the blockbuster movies. Their own personal quest brought them to Tempe to learn how teachers and students here reach the grail of learning the basics.

Frances Carmody and Mere Waitaiki spent most of January visiting Tempe's schools.

"It was a chance to see how other schools operate, to see if there were big differences, to learn new things," said Carmody, a teacher at a parochial school in New Zealand.

The visiting teachers observed that schools here have shorter lunches and lack a morning tea break, but they were excited about substantive differences.



Photo by Tempe Elementary Schools
Frances Carmody (left) and Mere Waitaiki (right) show Carminati students a poster of some of the jewelry, stones, gems and other artifacts that are important to their culture.



Photo by Tempe Elementary Schools
Frances Carmody demonstrates to students at Carminati School where New Zealand is in relation to the United States.

"The biggest thing is the social skills," Waitaiki said.

"Teachers here are using social skills to improve children's behavior. I've been blown away by the positiveness of teachers toward students and vice versa."

Scales Elementary teacher Candace Hale and Tempe Elementary schools physical therapist Marsha Weinbauer traveled to Lower Hutt last summer for the Tempe Sister Cities exchange. The New Zealand program has sent educators back and forth across the world since 1991. They appreciate the chance to see that thousands of miles do not change human nature.

"The biggest surprise is that the children are all the same," Carmody said. "Children are all the same the world over."



Photo by Tempe Elementary Schools
Mere Waitaiki proudly shows students the "treasures" she brought from New Zealand. The teachers shared customs, jewelry, money and artifacts with the children.